



# VA Career Search Strategies for VHA Health Professions Trainees

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**VA**  
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## AGENDA

1. TakeACloserLook@VA
2. National Recruitment Program
3. Hiring Flexibilities
4. VA Hiring Process
5. Q & A



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## TakeACloserLook@VA (TACLVA)

- The TakeACloserLook@VA (TACLVA) program is **VA's first agency-wide strategic recruitment initiative targeting VHA Health Professions Trainees (HPT)** while they receive training in VHA
- TACLVA is an ongoing collaboration between the VHA Healthcare Recruitment and Marketing Office (HRMO) and the VHA Office of Academic Affiliations (OAA)
- Key stakeholders to the program include VHA NHRS, VHA OAA, facility Designated Education Officers (DEO), facility Human Resources (HR) Offices, facility clinical hiring managers, and facility Public Affairs Officers (PAO)
- Ongoing TACLVA marketing efforts include **social networking presence at Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and Twitter** posts



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## TakeACloserLook@VA (TACLVA) Con't.

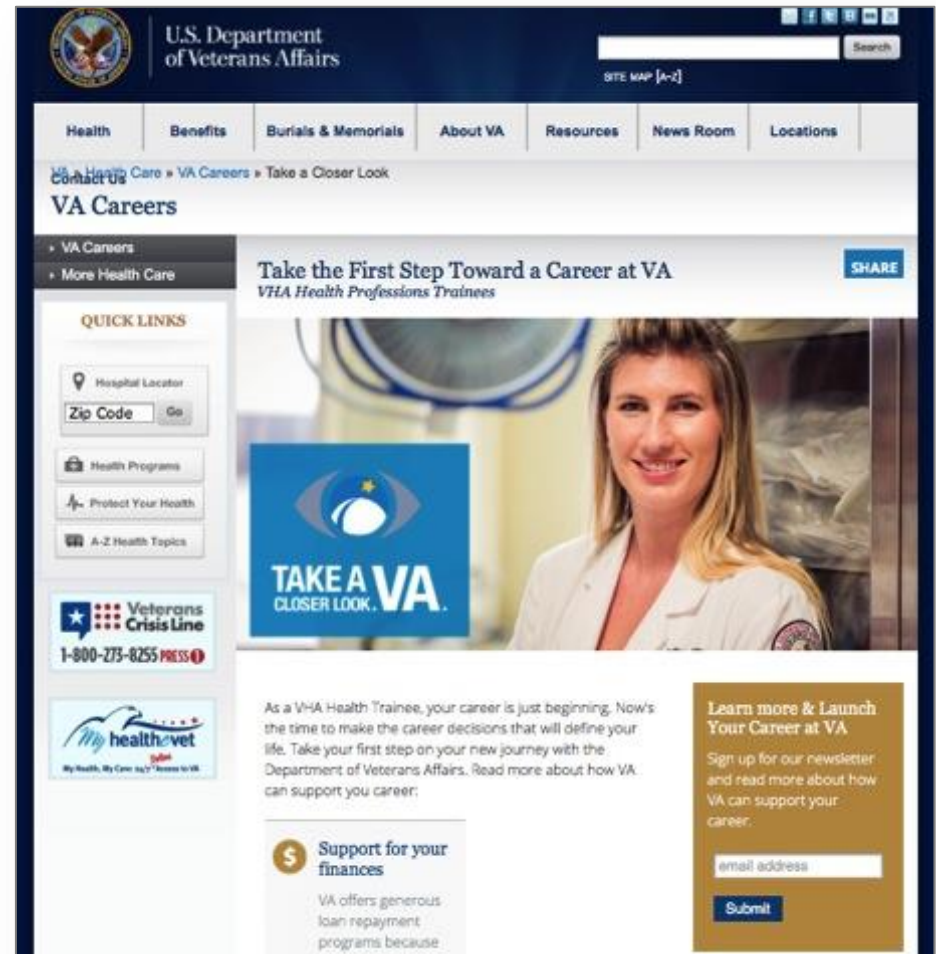
- Future program enhancements include data migration into VHA's new Applicant Tracking System and **providing individual sites access to lists of HPTs who trained at their VAMC**
- **TACLVA Lead lists are updated every six months** to reflect new HPTs in the system
- Future program enhancements include data migration into VHA's new Applicant Tracking System and **providing individual sites access to lists of HPTs who trained at their VAMC**
- TACLVA is also featured in **VA Blogs**, VHA Workforce Management and Consulting Office (**WMC**) newsletters, agency-wide HR, PAO, and program office calls



## TakeACloserLook@VA (TACLVA) Con't.

**Take A Closer Look @ VA landing page** hosts all information related to how VA can support trainees' careers moving forward and has received 10,793 page views since its inception in May 2014.

<http://www.vacareers.va.gov/taclva>







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## VHA National Recruitment Program



***"Hiring** is what you do when you let the world know that you're accepting applications from people looking for a job.*

***Recruiting** is the act of finding the very best person for a job and persuading them to stop doing what they're doing and come join you"*





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## VHA National Recruitment Program Con't.

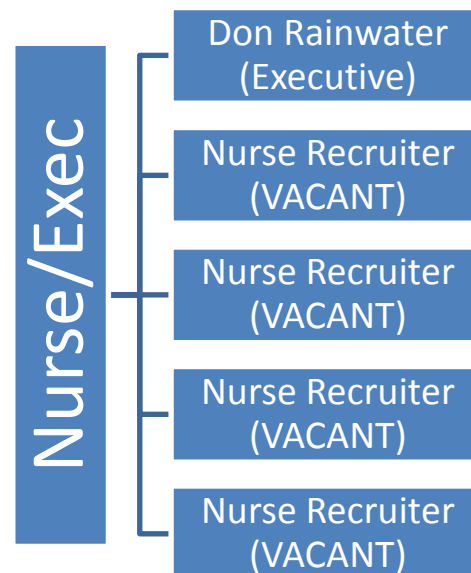
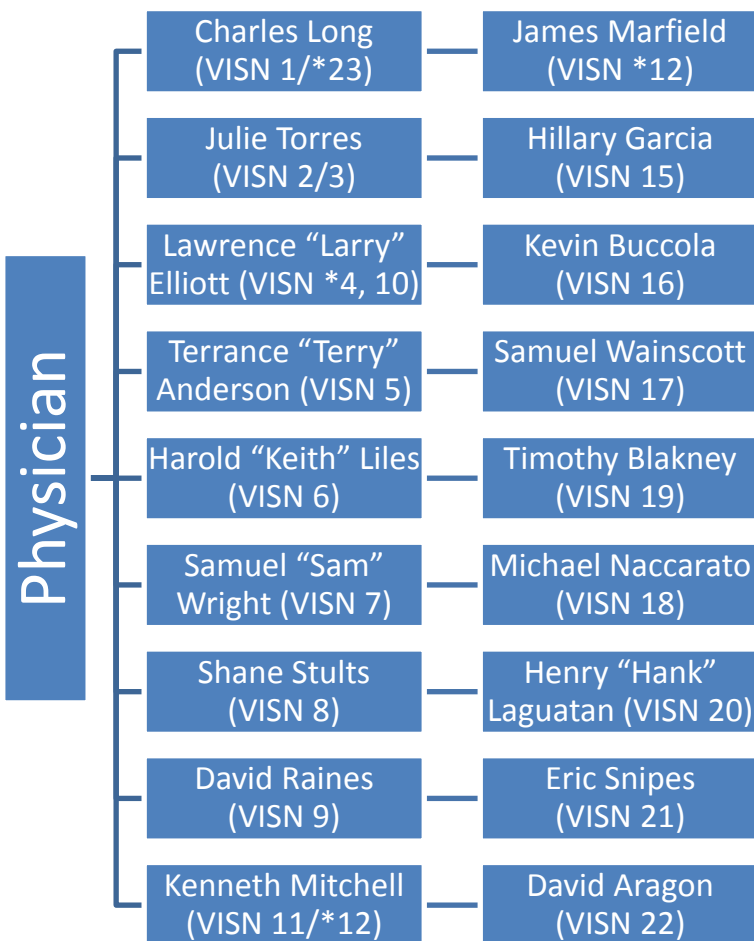
The **VHA National Recruitment Program (NRP)** provides VHA with an in-house team of professional healthcare recruiters – “headhunters” - employing advanced, private industry recruitment practices to fill VA’s critical clinical and executive vacancies.

- Commissioned by VHA Principal Under Secretary for Health in June 2009
- Initially piloted in 7 VISNs – VA-wide implementation in 2011
- Recruiters work **directly with clinical hiring managers** to learn position requirements (mandatory and preferred) to aid in finding the “**best fit**”
- Develop **client-/specialty-tailored recruitment plans** to aggressively identify, screen and refer passive and active candidates
- Consults on **healthcare recruitment industry trends/best practices** (supply/demand, compensation and benefits, workload norms, work-life balance, etc.)
- Represents VA at local, regional and **national job fairs and conferences**
- Assists VAMCs with identification of **obsolete hiring and onboarding practices** and works closely with stakeholders on feasible solutions
- Teaches HR professionals, facility recruitment liaisons (FRL) and nurse recruiters on recruitment best practices during quarterly **Recruiter youU training sessions**

*Source: 2015 ASPR Benchmarking Report*



## VHA National Recruitment Program Con't. – National Recruiters







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## Hiring Flexibilities

- VA loses majority of trainees to private sector competitors
- **“Hiring VA Trainees Final FY 16,” “HR Question and Answers FY 16,” and “Myth Busters-Special Hiring Authority”** fliers are excellent resources to reference during your VA job search
- Once internal employee job posting requirements in local bargaining unit agreements are met, current or former trainees can be appointed to Hybrid and Title 38 vacancies **without posting any type of vacancy announcement**
- Title 38/Hybrid Title 38 allows **selection of current trainees** who will meet qualification standards at the time of appointment as well as former graduates
  - Offers contingent upon meeting **qualifications at the time of appointment**
  - Graduates who still have pending credentials (licensure, certification, etc.) **may be hired as graduate technicians** in their occupations



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## Hiring Flexibilities Con't.

- Forego USAJOBS **when VAMCs already have a qualified or potentially-qualified candidate** – internal bargaining unit job posting requirements can normally be satisfied through other means such as internal emails, bulletin boards, etc.
- **Select HPTs early!** Trainees may be selected before receiving degree if on track for completing the program and otherwise qualified – no restriction on how early
- If announced at USAJOBS, **ensure language in announcements reflects that current trainees may apply** and assessment questionnaires are not screening out HPTs
- The flexibility exists to project future vacancies based on historical turnover rates and **earmark these positions for current HPTs as early as 1-2 years out from their enter on duty date so long as they're on-track to be qualified at the time of appointment**



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## Hiring Flexibilities Con't. – The Bottom Line

Generally speaking, these **requirements must be met to non-competitively hire** a Title 38 or Hybrid Title 38 candidate:

- Candidate **must be qualified or on track to be qualified by the time of appointment**
- Job posting requirements in your local Bargaining Unit (BU) Master Agreement must be met – ***does not require external USAJOBS announcement***
- **Veterans Preference** must not be violated
  - Does not require USAJOBS announcements
  - You must follow Title 5 Veterans preference procedures when hiring individuals into hybrid occupations
  - **These occupations are exempted from Veteran Preference considerations in FY 2017** because they appear in the **OIG's Top 5 Critical Shortage Occupation list for 2016: MD/DO, Nurse, PA, Psychologist, \*PT, \*Medical Technologist**  
*\* PT and Medical Technologist were tied for 5th*
- **Do not discriminate** in employment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy and gender identity), national origin, political affiliation, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, genetic information, age, membership in an employee organization, retaliation, parental status, military service, or other non-merit factor



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## VA Hiring Process

- VA is a federal agency able to use **various hiring authorities** when staffing vacancies
- The most commonly used hiring authorities for healthcare occupations in VA are Title 38 and Hybrid Title 38 while Title 5 is the hiring authority used for administrative non-healthcare occupations in VA
- **Title 38** includes: Physicians, Dentists, Nurses (RN, NP, CRNA, CNS), Physician Assistants, Chiropractors, Optometrists, Podiatrists, and Expanded Function Dental Auxiliaries
- **Hybrid Title 38** includes most other non-Title 38 healthcare occupations
- No matter the occupation or hiring authority, **VA has the ability to consider current VHA trainees on a non-competitive basis** meaning individuals can be considered and selected for vacancies without the VAMC having to announce the position at USAJOBS



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## VA Hiring Process Con't.

- Trainees should begin reaching out to VAMCs for employment once they're within **8-12 months from completing their programs**
- Trainees should consider **networking with the hiring manager and HR staff** at their desired VAMC sites so that once a position is approved to recruit, they can be considered on a non-competitive basis
- It's recommended trainees **build a profile at [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov)** and establish a **"job search agent"** and set it for daily delivery so that USAJOBS send you notifications when positions are announced that match your search criteria
- If positions are announced at USAJOBS for "Internal" VA employees only, trainees **DO NOT QUALIFY** since "Internal" implies permanent employees and trainees are on temporary, time-limited appointments





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## VA Hiring Process Con't.

- Trainees should **network with the following individuals** in their job search: 1) Regional recruiter(s) for the geographic areas you're interested in; 2) Hiring Managers; 3) Local Facility Recruitment Liaisons (FRL); 4) local HR Staffing and Recruitment Specialists
- The **most common mistakes** made by VAMCs in trainee recruitment:
  - VAMCs disqualify trainees because they don't yet meet the qualification standards
  - VAMCs announce positions externally at USAJOBS when hiring managers already have a desirable/qualified trainee interested in a position
  - VAMCs announcing externally at USAJOBS with an area of consideration of "Internal VA employees"
  - VAMCs who believe hiring flexibilities only apply to their current trainees. Title 38 and Hybrid Title 38 law allows VA to non-competitively hire anyone regardless of whether they trained in VA or not – so long as they're qualified or on track to be
  - VAMCs misapply Veterans Preference to occupations listed in the most recent OIG Top 5 Critical Shortage Occupation list
- Refer to **"TACLVA Job Search Guide for Advanced Fellows (Final V2)"** for additional tips



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